

Op-Ed

There are just no easy answers

After the Greensburg tornado a week ago, my daughter and I were talking on the phone about the devastation and the loss of an entire town. She asked, "What would you do if Norton was leveled by a tornado?" Without a pause, I said, "We would rebuild right where we now live."

Then I heard a Greensburg couple about our age reply to the same question, "No," he said, "because it would take too long to rebuild and we're too old to wait."

It made me realize what defines a town. It is a community because of a hospital, schools, businesses, and churches. These things are a town; those entities that serve others. Those are the very things people look for when they are moving to a new community. With that realization, I thought of the question again, would I rebuild if Norton was destroyed?

Aside from finding funding to

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



rebuild the infrastructure, how long would it take?

A hospital remodel was a couple of years, how long for a new one?

Schools for our youth and what facilities could be used in the meantime? Churches could share facilities, but there aren't any buildings. Businesses already suffer from shoppers leaving town to shop. Would people return to shop in Norton after a few months or a couple of years of forced shopping elsewhere?

I think people truly don't know what they would do if faced with the awful decisions and destruc-

tion such as those facing the Greensburg residents. The thought of Norton, or any town for that matter, never rebuilding is heartbreaking and yet could the aging populations of Northwest Kansas withstand the loss of industry and jobs? Young people would have to relocate to support their families. No businesses means no jobs; no jobs means no people.

It makes me realize the problems for Greensburg are in the first stage. The shock, the devastation are just the beginning. Next will come those difficult decisions. These are ones that I pray my community and no other community will ever have to face.

In the meantime, all I can do is pray for the people of the small Kansas town, ask God for His peace and healing and then ask Him to grant them courage, strength and wisdom as they struggle for the answers.

√Mrs. Hill, for "Kindness Unites Us." (called in)

√Arnold and Elaine Shearer, on your 40th wedding anniversary. (regular mail)

√Aaron Helm, on your appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. (e-mail from friends)

√Northern Valley High School musicians, on your fine showing at State. (e-mail)

√Mr. Rudolph, for donating

your time and talent to the Valley Hope "Wall of Honor." (regular mail)

√Norton High drafting students, on your great showing at the Hays Technology Fair. (e-mail)

(To submit a name or names, please e-mail tomd@nwkans.com, call either 877-3361 or 877-6908, mail to the office at 215 S. Kansas Ave., Norton 67654, or drop by the office. Thanks!)

Thumbs Up to ...

Grassroots political action a must

While it's still a great big world out there, our planet is getting smaller every day. Globalization has changed everything and everyone. It's hitting hardest in rural areas where we live — Kansas farms and ranches.

Today, most Kansans live in suburbs or cities and this demographic shift is becoming more pronounced and more distant from the people who make their homes and earn their living in rural Kansas. This distance has a direct impact on agricultural producers, their businesses and their rural communities.

This ever-growing chasm is measured in more than just miles. It's measured in perceptions and expectations and it drives societal trends. As populations shift from rural to urban, trends and expectations naturally follow. It's happening all around us.

Demographic changes, population shifts and the simple passage of time have resulted in more and more individuals holding public office in Kansas who have little or no direct, personal knowledge or experience with agriculture. These public officials today are often one, two, and sometimes three or four generations removed from the farm.

Still, in each and every county in Kansas, there are farmers and ranchers who are vested in their communities and this business we call agriculture. Many of these same Kansas citizens belong to commodity and farm groups. In moving a policy agenda, that's where power and clout rest. Those organizations with individual member-funded political action committees have never been more

vital in helping to achieve those goals.

It's where the agricultural voice must resonate. It's where we must visit with, inform and educate our neighbors and friends whom we elect to government offices. Before they became office holders, they were candidates waging political campaigns to get into those offices.

Will Rogers once said, "Politics has gotten so expensive that it even takes a lot of money to get beat."

Regardless of whether we talk about presidential, congressional, state or local elections, one fact remains — elections cost a lot of money and their price will continue to go up. This is one reason political action committees and advocacy organizations like Farm Bureau in Kansas play an important role in the political process. Working together, groups like this support candidates who share our positions on issues important to farmers, ranchers and rural Kansans. □□

Everyone with a vested interest in agriculture and rural Kansas should step forward and support candidates who understand us and our issues, including holding the line on property taxes, landowners' rights and reasonable environmental regulation. We have no one to blame but ourselves when legislation is passed that weakens our state's economy or candidates unsympathetic to our concerns are

elects.

During the last two decades, political action has become an integral part of the culture found in nearly every sector of the economy. Grassroots activism and financial strength represent an industry's best tools to build and enhance relationships with influential members of Congress and state legislators.

As more and more Kansans lose the ability to make a direct personal connection with agriculture and rural communities, it will become harder and harder to change their minds.

Still, that's our charge. That's agriculture's job. It's the responsibility of farmers, ranchers and those people who inhabit rural Kansas. That's where political action committees can be one of the most important issue-mobilizing forces protecting and promoting our goal of creating an environment in which farmers, ranchers and our families can prosper and grow. □□□

With this tool, we can strengthen crucial working relationships with those whom we elect to public office. We can educate and inform them on the important public policy issues facing rural Kansas.

Given today's demographics in Kansas, individual farmer/rancher participation in the political process has never been more important. □

John Schlageck is a leading commentator on agriculture and rural Kansas. Born and raised on a diversified farm in northwestern Kansas, his writing reflects a lifetime of experience, knowledge and passion.

Insight John Schlageck

Radio personality pulls stunt to help Greensburg

(Continued from Page 1)

Mr. Matchett said the children from Sunshine Daycare lined up and put money into the barrel. Another little girl gave a bag full of pennies and Elijah Winters donated all the money he had been saving for a PlayStation. Large or small the donations added up.

Early counting revealed the \$5,000 goal had been surpassed, so Mr. Matchett packed up at 1:30 p.m. Wednesday. It wasn't until he had the coins run through the counting machine at United Northwest Federal Credit Union and all the checks and cash were tallied that he learned over \$6,767 was raised. He said, "It's pretty good that the community could

come together and raise that kind of money in that short a time."

Mr. Matchett is sending a money order to the Haviland Friends Church, in care of Mrs. Eugene Ross, 104 Emporia, Haviland, Kan. 67059. The Haviland State Bank is also accepting donations. Money can be sent to the Greensburg Relief Fund, P.O. Box 348, Haviland Kan. 67059.

Former Norton woman killed by tornado

(Continued from Page 1)

also has a brother, Tony Fisher, Plainville. She had two other children, a son, Shannon Austin and a daughter, LeAnn Kinderknecht, both of Salina.

Her husband suffered two broken legs and was admitted to the hospital, where surgery was performed on one of his legs. Their son was not hospitalized, but he

did receive 14 stitches for a cut on his left leg and 12 stitches for a cut on his right leg. Mr. Greenwood was expected to be released from the hospital Thursday.

The American Red Cross and Mennonite Disaster Services from Hillsboro have met with the family, offering assistance. Future plans for Mr. Greenwood and his son are still uncertain.

A memorial fund has been established to help provide for the education of Mr. and Mrs. Greenwood's son. Donations may be sent to the Dallas Lee Greenwood Educational Fund, 221 N. Lincoln, Bennington, Kan. 67422-5009.

A complete obituary for Kitty (Fisher) Greenwood is on Page 2.

Council donates to women's, children's group

(Continued from Page 1)

a new City Code Inspector position at pay range 14. The council would like Mr. Lawson to give the Finance Committee a break-down of where in the budget that salary would come from. The motion passed 5-1 with Councilman Kelly Gaer voting no.

- Recessed for 5 minutes.
- Heard from Joe Durham that the Legion Baseball team beat Minneapolis High School, which

was the team's first game against a high school team. Mr. Durham said the new scoreboard is in and is being stored at the hospital until it can be installed. Also, he said, roofs have been put on the dugouts and several posts have been set for the new batting cage.

"The city's been really good with helping us and we appreciate it," he said.

- Heard from Councilman Jerry Jones that a Norton resident asked

if the basketball goal at Tweed Park could be moved from the north side of the concrete slab to the south side. He said the ball keeps going in a drainage ditch on the north side, which is usually full of water. Mr. Briery asked if it wouldn't be better to put it on the east or west end of the slab. City crews will see if it can be moved and, if so, where the best location for it would be.

Development discusses county promotion

(Continued from Page 1)

Norton Theatre, Barbeau House in Lenora and the SPPA grounds in Alma were added. The board asked Mr. Carter to call the guide and see how many pictures they could put in. The board also suggested a few other things, like the Lenora Jubilee website.

"Whatever we have on there, it needs to be entertaining," said Board member Brad Hopkins. "People come to be entertained."

Mr. Carter said they were also looking at getting a second page for Norton County businesses. Eight businesses would be able to split the page. The board said they would cover \$600 of the cost of the page.

- Heard from Mr. Carter that he is working with Norton Chamber Director Karla Reed to get a list of openings at government funded housing, like Sunflower Apartments and the Norton Manor, on the discoverNorton website.
- Were asked for volunteers from Mr. Carter for committees on promoting Norton County, housing, and the job fair.
- Suggested that a quarterly newsletter be put together. Mrs. James said a newsletter might encourage interest in economic development and would help people understand what they do and why they are doing it.
- Set the July meeting to be held in Lenora. Mr. Carter said the

board should meet in Alma, Lenora and Clayton once a year.

- Discussed the Neighborhood Revitalization Act. If done in the county, the act would allow people building new homes or remodeling old homes to receive a tax rebate. But, said Attorney Karen Griffiths, there is a lot of paperwork to get it started. Presentations need to be made to each taxing body in the county, which will all need to sign an interlocal agreement and agree to waive the taxes being rebated. Chairman Curtis Eveleigh said he would help Mr. Carter with this.
- Held a 15-minute closed session to discuss non-elected personnel.

Bee population has avoided colony collapse

MANHATTAN — A mysterious die-off of the nation's honeybee population hasn't spread to Kansas yet, says Kansas State University entomologist Sharon Dobesh, who attributes that luck to the hobbyist nature of most hives in the state.

"Everyone is grasping at any theory out there" to explain why so many of these vital pollinators are either dying or abandoning their hives, said Dobesh, pesticide and integrated pest management coordinator for K-State's department of entomology.

Possible causes of "colony collapse disorder" include new diseases, parasites, pesticides, pollution or a combination of these, Dobesh said. "And anything else that can be thought of." One theory even blames cell phone transmissions, she said.

But many of the affected populations were commercial migratory hives, she said, which are trucked from state to state to assure fruit set in specialty crops such as almonds and melons. Any honey produced is secondary to the value of pollination.

Fewer than a dozen beekeeping operations in Kansas would qualify as migratory, Dobesh said. "I would say the majority of beekeepers in Kansas are hobbyists. "We don't have a good handle on

the number of hives in the state," she said, "because the apiary law was rescinded in 2003." That law required registration of all beehives, which were inspected as needed. Such inspection is now done only if a beekeeper requests it, usually for transport to another state.

Possible reasons for the apparent vulnerability of migratory hives include stress from travel and the frequent division of the hives to increase numbers. But "they absolutely do not know" the cause yet, Dobesh said.

Nationally the disorder threatens at least 30 percent of the country's crops, according to Caird Rexroad of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's agricultural research service. He testified March 29 before the U.S. House subcommittee on horticulture and organic agriculture.

"With invasive pests and diseases of bees increasing over the last two decades, we may now have reached a tipping point where the bee colony can no longer fight back," he told the committee.

MAKE MOM FEEL SPECIAL ON HER DAY

BUFFET 11-2

- PORK ROAST AND DRESSING
- FRIED CHICKEN
- GARLIC PASTA WITH VEGETABLE AND CHICKEN
- SHRIMP
- POTATOES & VEGETABLE
- ROLLS
- SALAD BAR
- DESSERTS
- ICE CREAM

Adults: \$8.95
Kids 10 & Under: \$4.50
Reservations Requested for over four guests

TOWN AND COUNTRY KITCHEN
E. Highway 36, Norton, KS — Call 785-877-3511

Telegram:
(785)
877-
3361

MAY IS BEEF MONTH

Burger Bash

WHEN: SATURDAY, MAY 19

WHERE: JAMBOREE FOODS

TIME: 11 AM - 1 PM

PRICE: \$1.00

Bring a friend and celebrate Beef Month with an all-beef burger, chips and soda, all for just \$1.00.

BEEF **KANSAS BEEF COUNCIL**

IT'S WHAT'S FOR DINNER.™

GOOD LUCK

Graduates!

GET A FREE FACE PLATE WITH UPGRADE OR NEW ACTIVATION

STOP IN TODAY AT ONE OF OUR THREE LOCATIONS:

Hill City 303 WEST MAIN 785-421-6245	Norton 107 E. MAIN 785-874-4718	Plainville 200 W. MILL 785-434-2126
---	--	--

Kellie's Alltel Inc. authorized agent wireless

Limited-time offer at participating locations. Requires 2 year service agreement, credit approval and approved handset. \$200 early termination fee applies. Activation fees may apply. Other restrictions apply. Terms and conditions are available at Authorized Agent locations or www.alltel.com